

DILLINGHAM (J.R.)

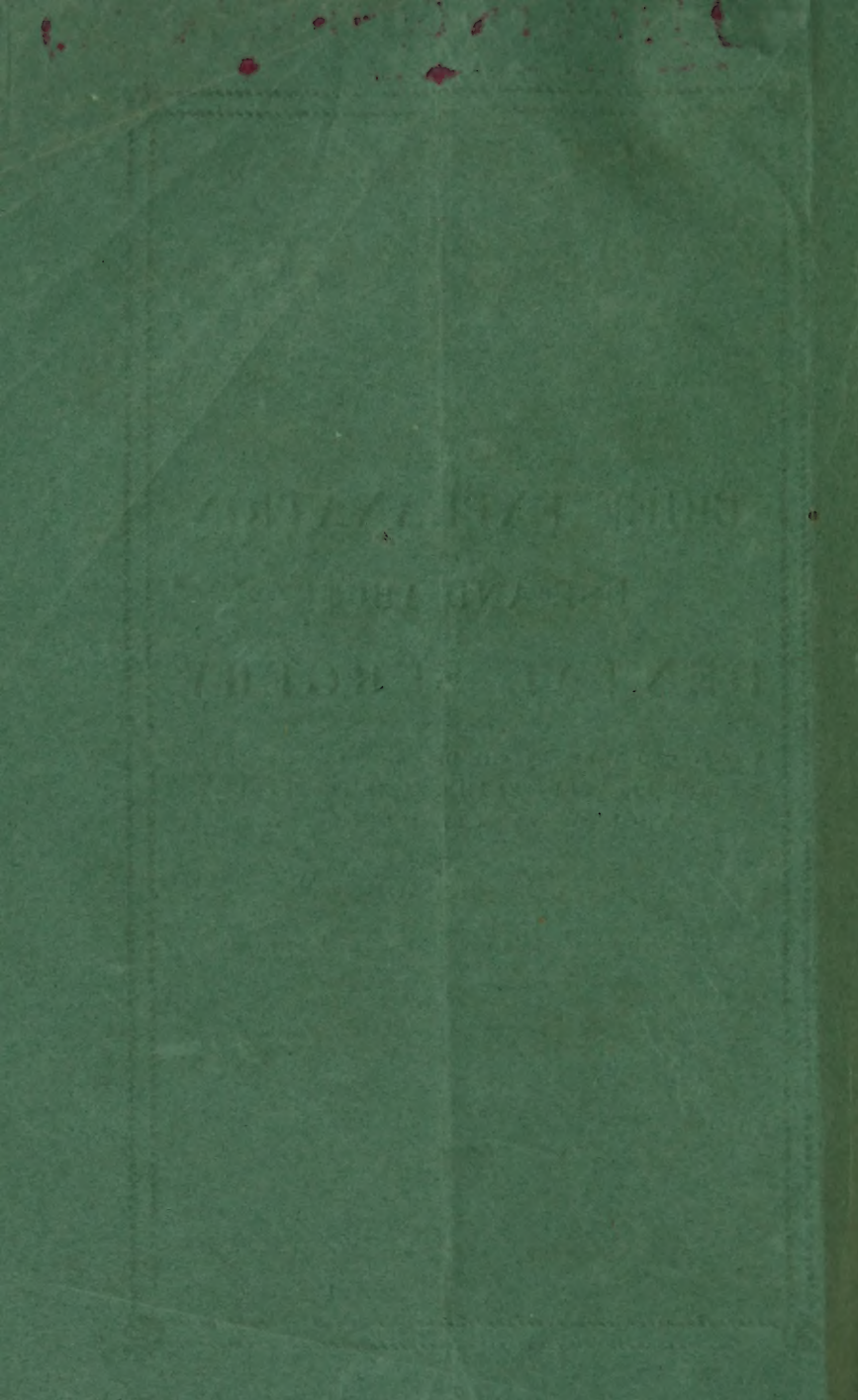


A
BRIEF EXPLANATION
ON THE
USE AND ABUSE
OF
DENTAL SURGERY.

CONTAINING
A FEW REMARKS ON THE DISEASES OF THE TEETH:
HOW DECAYED TEETH CAN BE PRESERVED,
AND LOST TEETH RESTORED, &c. &c.

BY J. R. DILLINGHAM,
OF THE FIRM OF
DILLINGHAM & HANNERS, DENTAL SURGEONS,
LYNN, MASS.





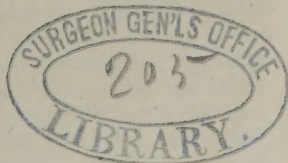
BRIEF EXPLANATION ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF DENTAL SURGERY.

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" But most the teeth for various use employed,
Disturb the system when themselves destroyed;
For when these organs yielding to decay,
In morbid exhalations waste away,
The vital air from heaven's ærial flood,
That warms with life the circulating blood,
Bears to the heaving lungs the deadly bane,
Where all its noxious qualities remain;
While every breath, the poisonous draught repeats,
And spreads disease with every pulse that beats."

Brown's Dentologia.



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PREFACE.

This little book owes its origin to the want which has long been felt by the public, of a cheap and convenient manual, containing a description of the diseases and defects of the teeth, and the means by which they may be prevented and repaired. Many valuable and scientific works on this subject have been published, but they are designed rather for the benefit of the dental operator, than for the information of the public, most of whom have neither time nor opportunity to study the volumes of Bell, Blake, Fox, Hunter and other eminent writers.

A great and widely extended prejudice has prevailed against the use of dental science in consequence of the injurious practice of ignorant pretenders who in numerous instances have occasioned serious injuries not only to the teeth, but to the whole system, by their injurious and unskilful operations. This prejudice would be entirely removed if none were to undertake the profession but such as have been properly qualified by a previous course of study—for this purpose an institution has been founded in Baltimore under the name of the "Baltimore College of Dental Surgeons," in whose professional skill the public can safely confide.

Much inquiry has been made concerning the nature of the substances used in filling decayed teeth. The evil effects which in many cases have resulted from the deleterious tendency of the materials which constitute certain modern inventions have justly filled the public with alarm—lest some foreign substance of a hurtful nature should be introduced, and thus increase the injury it was intended to prevent or occasion a greater. It will be one object of this work to assist the reader in his judgment on this important subject. An endeavor to furnish the public with a convenient and ready guide, which will enable them not only to avoid many of the evils and injuries to which the teeth are subject, but also to protect themselves from the injurious operations of unskilful pretenders must form an acceptable addition to the mass of common intelligence and cannot be otherwise than well received.

There are few things more conducive to human beauty than a fine set of teeth. And when the importance of soundness, and the intimate connection of their cleanliness to a good state of bodily health is truly known, the value of a science which tends to preserve and restore them, cannot be too highly appreciated. The possession of correct information on this subject will be of undeniable value to those who act upon its precepts, and assist to preserve them from much of the evil to which ignorance and inattention are subject.

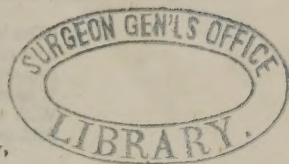
The practice of Dental Surgery has now become an honorable profession, and its important relation to human welfare has begun to be extensively appreciated. The public have become convinced that something more than mere pretension and handicraft is requisite to its successful and satisfactory performance. Fortunate are they who obtain the services of a skilful and judicial operator. Still more fortunate are those who by a careful attention to the contents of this little book, shall be preserved from the evil and pain to which the teeth are liable.

Within the few past years great advance has been made in the science of Dental Surgery, and its practice rendered more safe and efficacious, by well contrived instruments for its performance. The introduction of indestructible mineral teeth instead of those hitherto used which are liable to speedy decay, constitutes an important era in the Science. We are now prepared to remove much of the deformity, and to prevent much of the anguish, and many of the tears which have been too often occasioned by diseases of the teeth.

DENTAL SURGERY.

The Temporary Teeth.

"The first dentition asks our earliest care,
For oft obstructed nature laboring there,
Demands assistance of experienced art,
And seeks from science her appointed part;
Perhaps ere yet the infant tongue can tell
The seat of anguish that it knows too well,
Some struggling tooth just bursting into day,
Obtuse and vigorous urges on its way—
While inflammation, pain, and bitter cries—
And flooding tears in sad succession rise."



Brown's Dentologia.

It is my intention only to give a brief outline of the formation of the temporary teeth. A full description would occupy too much space for the limits of this small pamphlet.

First. Dentition commences about the sixth or seventh month, although there is great uncertainty in this respect. Instances are known when infants have been born with a number of teeth, whilst in many others they have not made their appearance until they were two or even three years of age.

"In a fœtus, of about four months old the rudiments of the teeth may be very distinctly seen, upon examining these substances, found in the jaw, they are seen to be soft or pulpy bodies, having a resemblance to the figure of the body of the tooth to be formed, and each of them is contained in a membrane proper to itself."

"For some time during the formation of the teeth, the alveoli grow much faster than the teeth themselves, which are consequently but barely contained within them. At the time of birth, the alveolar processes have increased so much, that they almost enclose or cover the teeth; thus a firm support is given to the gums, and the infant is enabled to make considerable pressure in sucking &c. without injury to the process which is going on underneath."

At this most critical period in the life of the child, mothers and those having the charge, should watch the earliest symptoms of irritation about the mouth. Should the cheeks become flushed, the eyes heavy, the skin hot, the rest disturbed, and the appetite

lost, they must lose no time in applying to a physician, in order that those remedies which they have found beneficial may be resorted to in time to prevent the fatal consequences which too often follow.

In teething, care should be taken, that the child has no hard substance in its mouth. Many mothers, misguided by an old prejudice, have given the child, laboring under these symptoms some hard substance, to facilitate as they suppose, in cutting the teeth. All this is wrong; it only tends to more inflammation, and consequently the child's sufferings are greater. No pressure can hasten its progress, nature must have its course."

If inflammation arises from the cause of the protruding tooth,

"The lancet, then, alone can give relief,
And mitigate the helpless sufferer's grief,
But no unpractised hand should guide the steel,
Whose polished point must carry wo or weal :—
With nicest skill the dentist's hand can touch,
And neither wound too little nor too much."

Permanent Teeth and Irregular Dentition.

Second. Dentition embraces the period in which the temporary teeth go through the *absorbing* process, to make way for the permanent teeth, or those designed to continue through life, making, in the whole, *thirty-two*. The new set cannot take their proper stations until the temporary set is removed. "Nature has provided the means of *absorbing* or gradually wasting the fangs of the temporary teeth, in proportion as the new ones advance in growth. If this natural process was never interrupted nor contravened the permanent teeth might advance to their positions, with little sensible pain, and without the assistance of art." But it is often the case that the first tooth does not absorb away fast enough to give place for the new. So we see the result of so many deformities in the human mouth, which is caused by *neglect* in not procuring professional advice. The old tooth must be extracted, so as not to injure the new one by a constant pressure, which will give a wrong direction to the protruding tooth. Every individual who has irregular teeth, may justly lay the *cause* of it, to the ignorance or neglect of their parents or those who had the care of them, in early life. Again, the temporary teeth should not be extracted *too soon*, less the gums harden and cause the teeth to shoot out in a wrong direction. To remedy these evils, when the child is about six years of age, go to a judicious dentist and request him to do what is required for the future benefit of the child.

"The influence which the teeth exercise over beauty, justifies

the pre-eminence which I attribute to them over all the other attractions of the countenance. This ornament is equally attractive in both sexes. It distinguishes the elegant from the slovenly gentleman, and diffuses amiability over the countenance by softening the features. But it is more especially to woman, that fine teeth are necessary since it is her destiny first to gratify the eyes before she touches the soul, and captivates and enslaves the heart.”—*Dict. Sci. Med. Paris.*

As it seems to be in place, I insert a few extracts from Brown's *Dentologia*, a poem on the diseases of the teeth, &c. which shows to perfection, the looks of those who have the misfortune to *own* a set of teeth such as the subject of his poem.

“Behold Urilla, nature's favored child;—
Bright on her birth, indulgent fortune smiled :—
Her honored grandsire, when the field was won,
By warring freeman, led by Washington
Nobly sustained, on many a glorious day,
The fiercest fervors of the battle-fray;
Survived the strife, and saw at length unfurled
Our union-banner floating round the world;
Then found a grave, as every patriot can,
Inscribed, “Defenders of the rights of man.”

Her sire, whose freighted ships from every shore
Returned with wealth in unexhausted store,
Was double rich :—his gold was less refined
Than the bright treasures of his noble mind.

And she herself is fair in form and face ;—
Her glance is modesty, her motion grace,
Her smile, a moon-beam on the garden bower,
Her blush a rainbow on the summer shower,
And she is gentler than the fearful fawn
That drinks the glittering dew-drops of the lawn.

When first I saw her eyes' celestial blue,
Her cheeks' vermilion, and the carmine hue,
That melted on her lips :—her auburn hair,
That floated playfully on the yielding air,
And then that neck within those graceful curls,
Molten from Cleopatra's liquid pearls,
I whispered to my heart, we'll fondly seek
The means, the hour to hear the angel speak.
For sure such language from those lips must flow,
As none but pure and seraph natures know.

Twas said—twas done—the fit occasion came,
As if to quench, betimes the kindling flame
Of love, and admiration :—for she spoke,
And lo ! the heavenly spell forever broke ;
The fancied angel vanished into air
And left unfortunate Urilla there :
For when her parted lips disclosed to view
Those ruined arches veiled in ebony hue,
Where love had thought to feast the ravished sight

On orient gems reflecting snowy light,
 Hope, disappointed, silently retired,
 Disgust, triumphant came, and love expired!

And yet, Urilla's single fault was small;
 If by so harsh a name 'tis just to call
 Her slight neglect:—but 'tis with beauty's chain,
 As 'tis with nature's:—sunder it in twain
 At any link and you dissolve the whole,
 As death departs the body from the soul.

Let every fair one shun Urilla's fate,
 And wake to action, ere it be too late;—
 Let each succeeding day unfailing bring
 The brush the dentifrice, and from the spring
 The cleansing flood:—the labor will be small
 And blooming health will soon reward it all,
 Or, if her past neglect preclude relief,
 By gentle means like these, assuage her grief,
 The dental art can remedy the ill,
 Restore her hopes, and make her lovely still."

Plugging the Teeth.

When a tooth becomes sensitive from taking cold or warm drinks, or a cavity appears ever so small, lose no time in going to a judicious dentist to have it filled with metal. This is one of the most essential operations in the dental profession, and one if attended to in time, will save the patient much pain and expense.

"There is no subject connected with dental surgery of more importance than that of stopping. It bears the preference to any other operation for the cure of diseased teeth. It should be an object of solicitude in every case when we are called upon to extract the teeth, to obviate the operation by plugging them, if in any way expedient or practicable."

"By the beautiful and useful operation of plugging teeth which are decayed by carious they may be preserved for many years; in most instances during the remainder of life; and not unfrequently from ten to twenty teeth may be preserved by this operation in the same individual."—*Kæcker*.

For this operation, fine gold is incomparably the best substance ever made use of for this purpose, notwithstanding the *very valuable* and *wonderful* discoveries made by empirical pretenders, who hoist their *shingle* under the false name of dentist. Those imposters succeed much better in plugging decayed teeth than in the other branches of the profession, for most any substance will remain a short time, and previous to the discovery of the deception, and the useless qualities of their *Pastes*, *Succedaneums*, *Cements*, *Diamond Cement* and *Lithodian*, they pocket their thieflly earnings and depart for some other place to gull oth-

ers who may be so unfortunate as to place confidence in them.—
All the above named metals for filling the teeth are composed of a compound of mercury and other metals.

☞ The following communication is from the pen of Dr. Flagg of Boston. Although it is quite a long article, and would appear to be out of place in this pamphlet yet it uses up the venders of "*mercurial compositions*" in so good a style I cannot refrain from giving it a place, hoping it will benefit those who give it a careful perusal. I leave it for them to decide whether it is for their advantage to have a composition in their mouth composed of *mercury and silver*.

[From the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

METALIC PASTES FOR FILLING TEETH.

Royal Succedaneum, Enamel, Cement, Bone Paste, Diamond Cement, Mineral Paste, Lithodeon.

These are some of the names of a compound of mercury and other metals, by the use of which, for filling carious teeth, the public have been imposed upon again and again within the last thirty or forty years. With some slight variations, it has always been the same base article, under whatever name it has been presented.

I have always been unwilling to appear as an expositor of the abuses in dentistry which are at all times so much practised around us, except when they have become so excessive that I could keep silent no longer. And although I have witnessed the effects of this mercurial preparation for a long time, since its first introduction into our city and neighborhood, under one or another of the above imposing names, I have forebore to notice the article in this way till I should be fully satisfied by repeated examinations, of its nature, and the result of its application.

Testimony relative to these points has been so abundant, and has flowed in so fast, of late, that it would be a violation of duty and conscience not to speak out, and speak plainly concerning it.

Teeth filled with this *mercurial composition* are almost immediately changed in their complexion. Front teeth in a few days after this *cement* has been placed in them, become so blue or black as to be ruined in their appearance, while it is retained even in cases where the anterior enamel is so perfect that a well-placed gold filling would not in the slightest degree change its natural healthy hue. Back teeth are often rendered so black, even into their fangs, that it is difficult if not impossible to restore them; and all this from the dark oxyd or salts of mercury which are formed from this metal in such a situation. Let one of these lumps of *cement* be removed after it has been placed in a carious tooth a few weeks, or in most cases in less than one week, and it will be found that its hidden surface, which was in imperfect con-

tact with the tooth, will be as black as gun-powder—to say nothing of the offensive state of the tooth itself. But in addition to these effects, which are of the *least* consequence in the list, there follow pain, swelling, gumboils, ulceration, inflammation extending to adjacent teeth, swelling of the glands about the tongue, throat and neck, neuralgia about the jaws, face and temples; and where several large fillings are placed at about the same time in very hollow teeth, even *salivation* is produced in those who are highly susceptible to the influence of *mercury*. All these are effects which I have either witnessed repeatedly, or of which I have obtained accounts from the most respectable dentists in our country. I am even now called from writing, to examine a case—the effects of a large filling of “*lithodeon*,” in which the under surface of the tongue is constantly irritated, and has been several times ulcered by coming in contact with the mercury. And I have a collection of specimens—teeth that have been extracted, charged with “*lithodeon*”—which will fully illustrate the above statement; for I have found it requisite to extract more adult teeth in the course of the last two or three years, on account of the mischievous effects of *mercurial paste*, than for any other cause, sufficient time having elapsed since its last introduction here, to show, not only the immediate bad consequences, but very many of the remote.

The testimony of Dr. E. Parmly—a gentleman of high professional reputation in the city of New York—should have much weight in relation to this matter. He has in several instances expressed his opinion publicly concerning it. His language, as quoted in Maury’s *Dental Surgery*, p. 152, is—

“For this operation” (the filling of teeth) “gold is the only substance known that can be permanently relied upon; although there are cases in which tin, and even lead, may be of temporary service when employed with skill and judgment. I regard cements, fusible metals, amalgams, succedaneum, and all other substitutes for the above named metals, as impositions on the public, never having seen a single operation in which these substances were employed, which would not have been more permanent, if even lead, the poorest of these metals, had been used; because it is less subject to decomposition and oxydation, to say nothing of the poisonous qualities of the mercury which most of the others contain. I have never known a perfect master of the art of stopping teeth either to employ or recommend the substances which I here condemn; and I believe the use of them is almost wholly confined to those persons who are unacquainted with this nice and difficult art.”

This mercurial compound is still in use in our city and the country about it, I will not say by dentists, but by a host of impostors, “operators on teeth,” whose advertisements fill a part of almost every newspaper; some of whom perhaps are even igno-

rant of its deleterious effects, but many of whom know well its qualities, and too well to trust it in their own teeth. It is an article which can be applied by any one who can stop a hollow tooth with wax or putty, and if it could be retained no longer than these, its evils would be very greatly diminished.

I am fully aware that these *cements* or *amalgams* have been used in some cases where they *seem* to be of service; but here, still, is deception; for in all such that have come under my observation (and these are very numerous,) it can be demonstrated, by an examination of them, that great mischief is going on beneath such fillings, and that a different and better treatment might have been adopted.

J. F. FLAGG, M. D.

[From the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

"No one who has paid the least regard to this modern scheme of unprincipled operators, can be ignorant of the alleged injuries produced by it on patients. Two roving English dentists, the Crawthurs, made sad havoc in New York, a few years since, with their Succedaneum, and the circumstance is not likely to be very soon forgotten. Here in Boston there has been something in use called *lithodeon*, that is regarded as a similar substance to that used by the adventurers who have promised so much and accomplished little or nothing. If a tooth is to be filled, the only safe way is to go to a dentist of known integrity, and submit to the operation he may propose. Gold, and gold alone, the Boston dentists assure us, is the substance that should be used in filling hollow teeth. No salivation follows; no exfoliation of the walls of the jaw takes place, or inflammation of the soft parts, the almost invariable effect of having them filled with the secret compounds of quack dentists—for *no others use them.*"

We have had in this town a certain Dr. formerly of Boston, who tried to make his *lithodeon* "have a run;" but as the people of this place were not disposed to countenance him, or for *other reasons* he has removed to Salem, advertises himself as an M. D. and calls particular attention to *his lithodeon*, and says, "Drs.—are the original inventers, have tested it by five years use, have spent much time in bringing it to *perfection* and have kept its compositions to *themselves.*" I will insert his directions so all persons may be aware when they have this *poisonous* composition put into their mouth. I do this, for within a few days past I saw a tooth filled with the same article, only under another name.—The cavity was so the individual could not see it; this cement was put in; the patient was informed that his tooth was filled with gold, and charged accordingly.

When you go to a dentist to have teeth plugged, if he does not forcibly crowd in his metal, you may be confident he is filling your teeth with some of his *soft, private, and hurtful compositions.*

DIRECTIONS FOR THE USE OF LITHOPEON.

1st. It is used in a soft state like putty, and readily enters into every part of the most irregular cavity, stopping it perfectly, and admits of being rounded externally so as to restore the original form of the tooth, which thereby becomes smooth and agreeable.

2d. In half an hour it becomes very hard and remains so permanently, being incorruptible and incapable of being injured or displaced by common usage.

3d. It requires but a few minutes to fill and restore the worst tooth; so that from a broken, rough, troublesome and offensive state it is made useful, comfortable, and cleanly.

4th. Teeth in the last stages of decay, even when more than three-fourths destroyed can thus be restored, to their original form and usefulness, preventing pain, avoiding extraction, purifying the breath and saving the teeth for use."

Filing the Teeth.

When the teeth are near together so as to keep substances from passing through them, they should be carefully separated by means of a fine thin file. That this operation should be performed in the most careful manner, it is necessary that the operator should be particular and not let the hand be unsteady, so as to gouge in on either side of the tooth. It has and is at present, been the subject of much dispute whether it was beneficial at all to file in between the teeth. Some pretend to affirm that the teeth decay faster after the operation than they did before. I am well aware of the circumstance which has given currency to this supposition. It is founded on results from the practice of those individuals who are totally and culpably ignorant of the professions.

A space should be kept open wide enough between the teeth to prevent the food remaining. One of the greatest causes of caries is produced by foreign matter obtaining lodgement.

Bad Breath.

This is a subject with which all the readers of this little book, have, I suppose, in some way, experienced its disagreeable effects; either had it themselves, or have come in contact with those who had. Either is bad enough. It is generally caused by the morbid state of the mouth, such as tartar and other foreign matter, diseased teeth, the lodgment of food in the interstices of the teeth. It has been often supposed that a fetid breath was caused or depended on the lungs or stomach. This not the case.

"Healthy infants have a sweet breath and so do old persons.

who have lost all their teeth. The breath of persons who have sound teeth, and keep them *clean* is seldom offensive ; on the contrary the breath of those whose teeth and mouth are diseased, or who *neglect* them is generally more or less fetid."

"When the disgusting effects of a foul mouth are considered it would appear impossible, that any persuasion could be necessary to induce persons to obviate so great a *nuisance*, even on their account ; or if they are too debased to procure their own comfort and cleanliness, at the expense of very little care and trouble, they surely have no right to shock the sense of others who possess more propriety and delicacy of feeling than themselves. Yet so it is, and the sight and the smell are alike constantly outraged by the filthiness of people who seem to obtrude their faces the closer in proportion to the disgust which they occasion."—*Thomas Bell*.

"Bruserade" once said to a young lady whom he heard sing and who had a strong breath, 'that is a charming voice, the words are very fine, but the *air* is not agreeable.'"

Cleanliness of the Mouth.

Let every person who has any regard for his health, keep his mouth free from any foreign matter. As I have said before, it is the cause of scurvy in the gums, offensive breath, and a derangement of the general system. Any one would suppose that the luxury of a wholesome mouth would of itself pay for the little trouble of keeping it cleansed.

Even some of the nations of Asia whom we call savages, are extremely particular in every point relating to their teeth. They consider it as much a duty to rub their teeth every morning, as to pray to their idols ; in fact it is with them a law and considered as a religious duty.

If many in our own country would act out the savage propensity enough to make it a religious duty to cleanse the teeth and mouth, even once a day, our bills of mortality would show less deaths by consumption, than they do the present day.

"We respire about twenty thousands times, in twenty-four hours. And yet for months and years, this vast quantity of air is rendered poisonous, by one or more diseased tooth. How little does it avail an individual, if by every possible means the purity of the air is preserved, if no impurities are suffered to remain in the streets ; if his tenants are kept clean, his apartments ventilated ; if he makes distant journeys at a great expense of time and money, for the benefit of pure air, and at the same time carry the *cloaca* of filth in his own mouth."

"Nature has formed the lungs most delicate, and sensible, and susceptible to the slightest injurious impressions. She has also finely tempered the atmosphere for its safe and healthy reception

in these delicate organs ; but an accident, or a disease, may render it impure, unfit for respiration, and cause it instead of harmonizing with the lungs in the most perfect manner, to exercise a baneful influence, armed with pestilence, and scattering the seeds of disease over the lungs, thus pouring the streams of deadly poison, through every vein of the system."

Tooth Brushes and Dentrifice.

In those cases where an individual's teeth cannot be kept clean by a brush and water, some simple tooth powder is indispensable. It should be used with a limber or soft brush—a hard brush passes over the teeth without entering their interstices—while a limber one passes between, and removes all foreign substances. In your choice of a tooth powder care should be used in procuring that free from acid. Many of the powders which are found at stores, are injurious on the account of acidity which they contain.

Manner of using the Brush.

Most of persons only brush the out-side of the teeth ; this is wrong, the inside should in no way be slighted, the back teeth should undergo the same process. The brush should be so managed that it shall clean every part of the teeth, between them, and on the inner side as well as the out side of them.

When you can get a good tooth powder free from deleterious substances use it as often as once a day; when you cannot, use none at all.

Tooth Ache.

"My curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortured gums along,
And through my lugs gies many a twang.
Wi' gnawing vengeance ;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines !"

"When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes,
Our neighbor's sympathy may ease us
Wi' pitying moan !
But thou the hell o' a' diseases,
Ay mocks our groans !"

"Where'er the place be, priests ca' hell;
Whence a' the tones o' misery yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou—tooth ache, surely beat'st the hell
Amongst them a'."—Robert Burns.

By "Burns" lines on the Tooth Ache, a person would imagine

that it was no slight "bitter pang." We sometimes see persons who have never experienced that pain; to them let me say, that he has, according to my experience given a correct idea of it; and I think those who have suffered that excruciating pain will agree with me on that point. As for the cure of the tooth ache, a person who believes all the advertismets in the newspapers, headed "*certain cure for the tooth ache without pain,*" would be led to imagine that the pain was not much after all, that is if a remedy can be procured at so little trouble and expense. But beware of these nestrums; the most of them contain deadly poisons, and should *never* be used. Kreasote is a powerful remedy for the tooth ache, but not always a sure one, that should be used with care. The *accident* which happened in a neighboring city some time ago, should be a warning to all who have an occasion to use it. If you have the tooth ache, the best and safest way is for you to go to a dentist or physician, and have them put the medicine in the cavity and cover it with some substance which will prevent it coming out, or otherwise injuring you; but if the tooth is so far decayed as to be of no use, request them to extract it at once, so as to escape the pain, irritation, and injurious effects on the *other teeth*.

Many suppose it a *killing operation* to have teeth extracted. Timid individuals, will suffer weeks, yea, years, before they can be prevailed upon to undergo the operation; the pain is terribly exaggerated, they suffer more real pain in imagination than in extraction.

"*The extraction of a tooth is painful but not near as much so as is generally imagined.*"

Artificial Teeth.

"*A mouth without teeth, may not be inaptly compared to a house without furniture; and the preservation of the one, as in the case of the preservation of the other, depends entirely on proper care and attention.*"

To those who have had the misfortune to lose their natural teeth, this chapter will give them some insight how that calamity can be restored. The insertion of artificial teeth owes its origin among the nations of antiquity; but modern invention has brought it to such perfection that the loss of the natural teeth can be supplied with artificial ones, that so near resemble those formed by nature that it is difficult to distinguish them or discover wherein they differ.

It is not as many imagine, that artificial teeth are designed for beauty only; but when we consider how essentially they are in masticating the food so as to prepare it for the digestive organs, we cannot but arrive at the conclusion, that it is the health which de-

rives the most benefit. It is an old saying but nevertheless true, "Meat well chewed is half digested."

The teeth are most essential to a good articulation. How often do we hear that lisping sound, caused by one or more departed teeth; in fact it causes a real mumbling; the words are cut up into all "shapes and sizes." This can all be avoided by the insertion of artificial teeth.

"This power of speech in which are nicely wrought
All shades of feeling, and all forms of thought,
The silver cord that binds all human kind—
The circulating medium of the mind :
Results from organs formed with heavenly art
To act in concert their appointed part,
With these the dentals hold the former place
Since to their loss or injury, we trace
The greater part of those imperfect sounds
With which the general speech of man abounds."

Brown's Dentologia.

Importance of the Back Teeth.

Many persons do not seem to value the *back teeth*, though anxious to preserve the front ones for appearance sake. Back teeth are in fact the most essential for the mastication of the food and in case of the loss of the front ones they are of great benefit in replacing them with artificial. If the back teeth have been extracted the cheek generally falls in, and gives the individual the appearance, as it is often, termed a "hatchet face." Be careful and preserve the BACK as well as the front teeth.

Tartar of the Teeth.

Tartar of the teeth is an accumulation of calcarious matter about the teeth. What it is composed of is not satisfactory ascertained.

It generally commences just at the union of the gum, with the neck of the tooth, and if not removed continues its ravages down towards the socket until the tooth is consumed and drops out.—It is one of the most injurious agents to which the teeth are liable to, and one of the greatest causes of disease in the gums and sockets, called scurvy in the gums.

"I have seen instances, in which whole sets of teeth, of which the greatest number were perfectly sound, drop out, one after the other, in consequence of the ravages produced upon the surrounding parts by the incrustation of tartar."—*Kæcker*.

"Nothing is more destructive to the health of the teeth than tartar. When any considerable quantity of this substance is suffered to collect about the teeth, the gums become inflamed and swollen ;

often producing absorption of the sockets, and the premature loss of the teeth."—*Snell*.

After the tartar is once removed, which will have to be done with a scaling instrument, by the use of some simple dentrifice with a soft brush; it can be kept clean without any further trouble.

Dead Teeth and Roots.

Dead teeth and roots should always be removed. The irritation caused by them, lead to many malignant diseases of the jaw-bone. A bad breath, gum-boils, cause sound teeth to decay—and so many other deleterious effects, that I urge every individual possessing them who values his comfort and health to have them at once extracted.

By their constant irritation they may be considered as one of the greatest causes of many nervous affections, such as *tic douloureux* convulsions, epilepsy, dyspepsia, &c. &c.

Quackery.

Quackery is carried to that extent at the present day, that it becomes the duty of every individual to cast in his "mite" to check its ascendancy. We find it in all kinds of professions, but more especially, in the practice of Dental Surgery. It has of late been carried so far that a well educated Dental Practitioner is looked upon in the same light as those who never made the least exertion to acquire knowledge in any one branch of the profession. Some say they have a *natural inclination* to practice Dentistry, and had no need of study to acquire the information which they already have. That "natural inclination;" when analysed is found to incline more towards the *pay*, rather than the necessary information requisite to a Dental Practitioner.

It is as essential for a Dentist to pass through a regular course of study, as for a medical man to study his profession, before he undertakes the practice of medicine. If he has not done this, he is not qualified to practice dentistry—and as such, he should be known as a "Dental Quack," instead of a "Dental Surgeon"—for they are *two* distinct professions, the one having not the least countenance in the other.

If you wish the services of a dentist, in the *first* place, find out whom you employ; in the *second*, never employ any one until you are confident to which of the *above* professions he belongs.

I will relate quite an amusing circumstance which I was eye witness too, a short time since, in a town a few miles from Boston. At the house where I was stopping, you might see nailed at the side of the door a sign, in large gilded letters, informing

all that passed, that "Dr. B——, Surgeon Dentist, from Boston," could be found within. In the evening a gentleman called to have a tooth extracted; the Dr. wishing for some one to hold the light, I offered my services, he not knowing that I was in any way connected with the dental profession. The tooth was the first bi cuspides generally only one root, never more than two.—The gentleman inquired "if the extracting of the tooth would be painful, and how many roots it had;" the Dr. replied that it would not *hurt* him, in the *least*; he could not say *certain* but *rather thought* it had *four* or *five* roots. The tooth was *hauled* out, not extracted, with great pain, and with but *one* root. He afterwards informed me he was sometimes *deceived* in the extracting of teeth but could *generally* tell how many roots a tooth had *before* as well as *after* it was extracted. The fact was he was no more acquainted with Dentistry than the city gentleman was with farming, who thought he would turn farmer, and purchased a situation—sowed his corn—and then ploughed it in.

Country towns, in the vicinity of Boston, are literally flooded with impostors of the same "*knowing abilities*," who never remain a sufficient length of time in any one place to see the failure of their operations, nor do they ever go to the same place to hear of them.

Large towns or cities are by no means free from their company. In Boston, for instance, a person can scarcely turn a street but what he comes in contact with "Dr. such a one, Dentist"—how they all live is a subject for conjecture. One thing is certain they all cannot obtain a good living excepting they practice "*Quackery*."

I would not by any means, be understood that they are all of the same stamp: we find in Boston, many of the most celebrated and skilful Dental Operators in the country. There is no city in the world, of the same size, that contains more honest, skilful and trust worthy Dentists, than Boston. They have by a constant attention to their profession, dealing honestly by all and performing their operations in the best manner—built themselves up a name, which will descend to generations yet to come, as being the greatest benefactors in this branch of the healing art.

When you require a Dental operation performed, find out whom you employ—inform yourself, if they are worthy of your confidence. You can always find those who will perform these operations faithfully, and with reasonable charges. Why not give your countenance to such, you will then have no fault to find with the Dental profession. One of the greatest draw-backs, in the practice of Dentistry, is in your employing persons who are culpably ignorant of their business; their work fails to meet your expectation, and then, it is generally the case, blame falls on the whole profession. Employ none but what are regularly educated, and you *know them to be so*, then you will have no fault to find with Quackery in the practice of Dentistry.

Concluding Observations.

I have attempted to show in a manner as simple as possible, the means to be employed in the preservation of the human teeth.—The small space in this little work would not admit of my going into the “whys and wherefores,” but I hope enough has been said to convince all of the importance of preserving their “masticating apparatus ;” not only for the sake of appearance, but for their help to the digestive organs.

There are many persons who would avail themselves of dental assistance, if they did not think it was too expensive. They let their teeth decay, until extraction is the only cure ; then they at once appreciate their value, and if they afterwards have artificial teeth, it generally costs them three times as much as it would to have them filled when they first commenced decaying.

To those to whom the price is an object, let me say, that the dental practitioner is no better paid than any other profession, requiring equal skill and tact. The materials which we use, are costly ; they cannot be purchased for nothing, and it is not reasonable to expect that we can furnish stock, “find ourselves,” and do the work *for nothing*. A reasonable compensation is all that an honest dentist requires or expects. I have been thus plain for the reason that we often have persons try to beat down our prices below the first cost of the materials used. To those let me say, if you wish to have your operation done for little or nothing, you must apply to those individuals whom I have introduced to you in the chapter on Quackery.

The above I mean for those who are *able* to pay, not for the person who has hard work to earn his daily bread. To him, we are willing, and wish to make a deduction from our regular charges.

I have now arrived at the conclusion of this little work, and leave it in the hands of a reading public, hoping it will be a guide to them of sufficient importance to induce them to have a more guarded care of those important organs, “*The Teeth*.”

REMOVAL.

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LESTER, MARY C. 1834-40.